

**DISTRICT VI ADVISORY BOARD
MINUTES**

**Wednesday, January 17, 2001
7:00 p.m.**

**Evergreen Recreation Center
2700 N. Woodland**

Members Present

John Van Walleghe
Tony Rangel
Sharon Fearey
Bickley Foster
Doratheia Sloan
Linda Matney
Wendell Turner

Members Absent

Clarence Wiley
Bob Schreck
Greg Chinn

Guests

Listed at the end

Council Member Cole called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m. She welcomed guests and asked DAB members to introduce themselves, identifying the area or association that they represent in District VI.

Approval of Minutes

Council Member Cole asked for approval of the January 8, 2001 minutes. The minutes were approved as submitted. (Rangel/Sloan 8-0)

Approval of Agenda

Council Member Cole noted that City staff had requested to add an item to the agenda, conversion of Santa Fe Street between Murdock and Tenth Street. She also asked that a discussion of Cell Towers be added as item number six (6). If the items are added, **Council Member Cole** suggested that item number four (4) might become optional for this meeting due to time. Amendments to the Agenda were approved. (Foster/Van Walleghe 8-0)

Public Agenda

1. No items were presented

Member Casados arrived at approximately 7:20 p.m.

Board Agenda

2. Two-Way Main Street Conversion Study

Council Member Cole gave a brief history of how the streets have existed as one-way since the 1950s. In 1993, community groups were brought together to consider changing the one-way direction of Emporia, Topeka, and Main Streets to two-way traffic. However, no agreement was reached for the changes. Shortly afterward, the Council voted to change South Main from Douglas to Kellogg to two-way. Since that time, requests have been

received from the residents in the neighborhood areas of these streets to change to one-way.

Council Member Cole then introduced **Mike Lindebak, City Engineer**, who reported that the City had contracted with **HWS Engineering**, Manhattan, KS to conduct a study of considered projects converting the one-way streets. The study focused only on traffic impact and associated costs. Lindebak asked **Mike Norman**, to present the study information.

Norman explained that their engineers had studied the preliminary alternative of making Main a two-way street from Douglas to 17th. The research was completed and the firm now needed public input. Norman presented information from the traffic analysis portion of the study including assigning grades of A through F to indicate the level of service including an assessment of how the roadway works today. He pointed out that a project yielding a C grade is typically sought as it is less expensive than to achieve an A or B grade but allows for future capacity that grades D and F do not.

Norman reported that one impact of converting Main to a two-way street is increased traffic in the future, north to 13th Street—from 10,000 vehicles daily to 15,000-18,000 daily in approximately twenty (20) years. He also stated that another impact to consider would be the need for new turning movements, requiring reconstruction of corners and traffic lights. The general conversion without the enhancements would be acceptable for today's traffic volume but would not be adequate for the increase anticipated in the future according to Norman. With the enhancements, the grade for turns would change from an existing A to C except at Douglas, and for through movements from existing B to C. Norman stated that other factors impacted by a conversion that should be considered include speed, parking structures, and vehicles backing out of driveways. **Council Member Cole** added that some impact would also be realized on the use of other streets as a result of the conversion.

Board Member Casados asked how the conversion might impact Horace Mann School at 12th & Main. She was particularly concerned about the issue of buses and traffic congestion. Norman stated that they would need to look at parking and possibly eliminate during bus times. **Board Member Rangel** asked if the right-of-way between Douglas and Murdock was large enough for expanding the street and Norman said that their analysis did not indicate that expanding the street would be necessary for the conversion.

Members of the public spoke regarding concerns and questions, as listed below with Norman's responses in italics:

- Parking between 13th & 17th Streets on Main/Park Place. *Parking would remain.*
- Crossings for schools. *May be necessary but speed of traffic would be slowed due to turns off Main.*
- How would the addition to the school building be impacted? *Don't know yet where the addition will be built.*
- Why convert from 13th to 17th when it is residential? *Two-way is actually a good fit for residential, more conventional.*

- Driveway is narrow and backing out onto two-way streets may become more of a problem. *Driveway can be widened by the property owner up to 30 feet if the property line allows.*
- Moved from St. Louis nine (9) years ago and Wichita's streets are a godsend in comparison. Will traffic lights be timed differently? *Yes, the engineers will look at it and its importance to maintain speed limit.*
- How will deliveries be handled in the commercial areas; currently those trucks just double-park to unload. *Signing and enforcement will be necessary and some areas will be notched and marked for loading/unloading.*
- Increased traffic will create more noise. *Any noise increase will most likely occur in the business area during business times.*

Board Member Fearey asked if two-way traffic should end at 13th? **Norman** replied that it could be considered.

Public questions continued.

- How will this affect the project planned for 21st Street? *Lindebak stated that the conversion could increase the project cost some but it could also reduce it with the elimination of a light at 21st Street.*
- What about stop signs to slow traffic from 13th to 17th along Park Place? Norman stated that a speed would be studied after the conversion. *Lindebak stated that a stop sign is currently sited at 17th now.*
- With the projected increase in traffic, how can a two-way conversion benefit the residents of Park Place? *Two-way streets are typical to residential areas and speeds are slower than on one-ways.*

Board Member Foster asked about potential for increase in traffic accidents and if turning lanes would be needed? **Norman** replied that most accidents occur on four-lane undivided streets when cars are turning left.

Public questions continued.

- Could a stop sign be placed at 15th to slow traffic? *Current thinking is that stop signs do not control speed due to motorist perceptions/behavior: 1) disregard for stop signs, 2) accidents occur for those who do stop, and 3) creates a false safety for children who assume the cars will stop.*
- With all of the opposition, how can the City proceed with the conversion?
Council Member Cole responded that numerous requests have been received by the City to change the street direction. The City responded by hiring the people with expertise to study a possible change. We are not assessing the opinions of the neighborhoods. If a decision is made by Council to proceed with the conversion, residents who oppose can use the petition process to protest.
- Doesn't a barrier exist through historic preservation that would not allow changes to curb cuts and driveways? **Council Member Cole** stated no.
- Concern as a business owner on the impact to surrounding streets. If acceptable now, why change? *Some impact would occur on Market Street but overall, better traffic circulation would occur.*

- Issues of how the conversion would be paid for and difference in “neighborhood” and “residential” were deferred for later discussion.

Recommendation: No Action Taken

3. Mid-Town Two Way Street Study

Council Member Cole stated that requests had also been received to consider converting the one-way streets east of Broadway—St. Francis, Emporia, and Topeka. As with Main, a study has been conducted by Baughman Engineering. **Jeff Bradley, Baughman Engineering**, presented the following information.

The three streets were considered in the area of Central to 17th Streets. The area is residential and business with Via Christi St. Francis Medical Center generating a high volume of traffic. As in the Main Street study, the levels of standards (LOS) were considered with utilization of the current City’s traffic counts, supplemented by study counts:

Current Approximate Counts:	South of Via Christi	3,000-5,000
	North of Via Christi	2,500 or less
	Further North	1,200 or less
	Topeka	9,500
	Broadway	14,000

Bradley stated that with the proposed conversions, the LOS increased slightly in a few areas. Some modifications would be needed to curbs and signals. Currently, a lot of street parking exists. Off-sets would be required at the following, causing some loss of on-street parking:

Topeka at 13th St. North
St. Francis at 11th Street
Emporia at 11th Street
Topeka at 12th Street
All intersections at 13th Street

Bradley explained that the project cost would be approximately \$900,000 for construction only, using stockpiled parts. If new parts are used, the cost rises to \$1.2 million. Both quotes would also require an additional 25% administration cost.

Bradley noted that impacts from the conversion would include a reduction in speed and on-street parking; altering the bus route on East 17th Street; and new signage and heavier pavement markings.

Board Member Foster asked if Via Christi (VC) had been involved or provided any input. Bradley stated that the current construction of the Cancer Center on the corner of Murdock and Topeka was considered but no Via Christi representative had been contacted. Council Member Cole stated that VC did visit with her and attended the Historic Midtown Association meeting and discussed the current construction.

Board Member Matney asked if the overall opinion from the consultants was that adequate capacity currently exists for traffic increases if these three streets and Main were all made two-way? Bradley responded that their study indicated that the capacity would be adequate up to the year 2030. Matney then asked why Market is not being studied and Lindebak responded that Market is viewed as the access street to the central corridor and is also narrower than the other streets.

Board Member Fearey asked why the curbs need to be modified in the residential areas when sharp corners are more typical of these areas? Bradley stated that modification would bring up to design standards and are also necessary for today's vehicles. Fearey then asked if 11th Street wouldn't be closed with the railroad modification project. Lindebak stated it probably would and that VC had requested the closure.

Questions/concerns from the public included the following with Bradley's responses in italics:

- The conversion will add to the existing parking problems and would restrict to one side only. *Bradley stated that with the current street width of 31 foot, adequate space allows for the two-way and some restricted parking. No plan exists to widen the street.* **Lindebak** stated that most streets built prior to 1978 (approximately 90%) were 31 foot back-to-back. None were at a lower standard than these. **Council Member Cole** agreed that better enforcement would be necessary to make it work.
- The railroad tracks at 16th & Broadway need to be removed.
- Issues with restricting turning on 10th Street from the three identified streets. *Two-way would allow turns on Topeka.*
- Safety of children crossing the three streets. *Some sidewalks and safety ramps are planned as part of increasing the standards to comply with ADA requirements. If dedicated school zones exist, signals will be added.*
- Will offsets take some of the property owner's property at 13th & Topeka? *Not at that intersection.*
- Proposal to block the intersection at 10th & Topeka and require cars to turn left or right.
- Question the request for change between 13th & 17th. **Council Member Cole** again stated that she had received the requests to study the change. As a Council Member, she is duty-bound to respond to the requests. She stated that she does not want the City to spend the money for the project if the conversions would not produce favorable results.

Board Member Foster noted that when the original conversation occurred, opposition also existed. The change was made then for improving the convenience to getting into downtown. Will this change make it inconvenient? And will sidewalk be improved? **Lindebak** stated that the Main Street conversion emphasized a favoring of southbound traffic progression. He also said that improvements to sidewalks are typically requested by the property owners through a petition in which they agree to pay for the improvement. One exception is sidewalks along arterials identified in the Major Transportation Plan paid for by the City as part of the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

He added that a small amount of funding is available in the City budget now to design wheelchair ramps for ADA compliance.

A member of the public asked if this decision could be made by ballot. **Council Member Cole** stated that no formal vote would take place but that she would want a democratic process used to make the decision.

Another person spoke in support of the conversion due to the reduction in speed. She stated that she worked at VC, walked to work, and consistently saw cars going the wrong way on the one-way streets. She supported that VC is well established as a regional medical facility with people coming into the City every day to receive services. Wichita needs to make access to VC as convenient as possible by reducing the confusion caused by one-way streets. Another resident of the area expressed concern about the house on Park Place that is decorated for the holidays and draws constant traffic for a period of about one-two months. A second resident supported the concern, stating that she was disturbed that two firms are studying the area and that 13th to 17th is residential not included formally in the study.

Council Member Cole then asked Mike Lindebak to address the question of who pays for the projects. **Lindebak** stated that the City at-large would pay for the projects. They would first need to be scheduled into the CIP for the next ten years. He explained that the City sells bonds for ten years with ten mills of the property tax committed to debt-financing.

4. Conversion of Santa Fe Street

Paul Gunzelman, City Traffic Engineer, presented information about Santa Fe explaining the issue is the street is currently one-way between Murdock and 10th Street and two-way south of Murdock and north of 10th Street. The request to change the one-way portion is in response to the use of a parking garage for VC. Council Member Cole wanted to be certain that any impacts to the residential areas from the changes be considered. She asked the Board if they would like to have a presentation on future projects planned by VC? Fearey (Matney) moved that this be scheduled for the February 5th meeting of the District Advisory Board. Motion passed 8-0. Gunzelman agreed to coordinate with the Neighborhood Assistant to contact VC and arrange. Board Member Fearey and Steve Pray, Historic Midtown Association, agreed to prepare a flier for distribution once VC confirms the presentation.

5. 37th Street Sidewalk/police Academy Park

Gene Rath, City Engineer, explained that the area requested for the sidewalk is bound on the west by Womer, east by Seneca. He attended the Sherwood Glen Neighborhood Association meeting the previous night to hear the issues. He stated that a very small amount of funding—\$50,000—is allowed each year to mainly fill in the gaps to connect the new sidewalks for the arterials. The cost of this project is \$135,000. Staff feels that sidewalk is a worthwhile project but not a high priority. The neighborhood has three options including sharing the cost with the City on the project; petitioning the sidewalk in

which it could be considered as a future project for District VI; or, asking the Council to consider as an at-large project.

Board Member Sloan stated that she understands the City's position and would like to see the neighborhoods consider how they could share the costs. Rath noted that if residents agree to support the cost of a sidewalk project, a maximum would be set for payment by the property owner. Sloan restated that she would still like for the residents to share in the cost. Rath was asked the cost of a foot of sidewalk and he reported that one foot of a four-foot sidewalk is approximately \$14-15 per (linear) foot. Council Member Cole stated that support from the residents should be first assessed.

Board Member Foster stated that he felt Wichita spends a very small amount on sidewalks and initiatives to construct sidewalks are received with very low interest. Foster said that sidewalks are important to connect neighborhoods. **Board Member Van Walleghen** suggested that federal grants might be available for sidewalks like the current bike trails funding.

Board Member Sloan (Fearey) moved to receive and file. Motion passed 8:0.

Action: **Received and filed.**

6. Adjournment

Council Member Cole noted the time of 10:14 p.m. and requested that the meeting be adjourned with postponement of the agenda items not reviewed at this point. **Board Member Fearey (Casados)** moved to adjourn. Motion passed 8:0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dana Brown, District V Neighborhood Assistant

Guests: